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FM AMEMBASSY KINGSTON  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7562

UNCLAS KINGSTON 000324

SENSITIVE

DEPARTMENT FOR DS/IP/WHA, DS/IP/ITA, WHA/CAR

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: ASEC CASC JM

SUBJECT: KINGSTON EAC REACTS TO DEMONSTRATIONS AND  
ROADBLOCKS FROM GASOLINE TAX INCREASE

¶1. (U) This cable contains information that is sensitive,  
but unclassified. Please protect accordingly.

¶2. (U) A number of sporadic roadblocks and demonstrations  
occurred today in Kingston, possibly in response to recent  
increases in gasoline taxes announced by the Government of  
Jamaica (GOJ). Jamaican police responded to the scene,  
quickly restored order and arrested some individuals.  
Several of the reported roadblocks occurred on or near  
Washington Boulevard, the main thoroughfare between Kingston  
and Spanish Town. In one incident along this road, police  
reportedly were forced to fire shots to disperse crowds. No  
reports of injuries have been reported from this gunfire.  
Most of these incidents occurred during the morning hours.  
These demonstrations were reported on Jamaican television and  
radio channels.

¶3. (SBU) In response, Embassy Kingston's EAC met in the  
afternoon of 4/28/09 to discuss today's situation. A  
security announcement was issued advising personnel of the  
days events, and encouraging them to monitor the news  
channels, avoid areas where demonstrations are occurring, and  
consider remaining inside during the evening hours. The  
Embassy issued a Warden Message using the same language as  
the security announcement. Post Management permitted post  
personnel to depart one hour early. The US Peace Corps  
Country Director issued similar information and warnings to  
all the Peace Corps Volunteers in country through their  
notification network.

¶4. (SBU) It should be emphasized that these are relatively  
small and sporadic demonstrations and road blockages, and  
that Jamaican police and security forces continue to have  
control of the streets. Yesterday, newspaper articles  
reported that Jamaican opposition groups planned to voice  
their displeasure with the GOJ's increase in gasoline taxes,  
and that vigils might be held also.

¶5. (U) Post continues to monitor the situation, and will  
advise of developments septel.

HEG